

BOOK REVIEWS

REFERENCE SHELF

A Guide to Immunization for Canadians. Prepared by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization 1979. 92 pp. Illust. Health Protection Branch, Laboratory Centre for Disease Control, Department of National Health and Welfare, Ottawa, 1980. Free on request, paperbound. ISBN 0-662-50692-8

Physicians are often asked questions about immunization. This bilingual, pocket-sized booklet supplies most of the answers. The National Advisory Committee on Immunization publishes it to assist in standardizing procedures throughout Canada. In early 1980 the first edition was sent to those physicians likely to consult it, including pediatricians, internists and primary care practitioners.

The booklet provides authoritative comment and advice on the use of all licensed immunizing agents for infectious diseases available in Canada as of April 1979. Appendices include descriptions of newly developed but as yet unlicensed agents and a list of licensed manufacturers' addresses.

After an introductory section on such general considerations as cautions and contraindications, storage of vaccines and vaccination site preparation, there are recommended schedules for immunizing infants and children. Schedules for adults are in the chapter on foreign travel.

The book is then arranged into sections on active and passive immunizing agents. For each agent there are data on the morbidity and

mortality in Canada of the disease it protects against. Next is a brief description of the agent and its recommended use, adverse reactions and contraindications.

Revised recommendations from the committee will be incorporated in the next edition of the guide. In the meantime, revisions are published in *Canada Diseases Weekly Report* as they occur. Both the guide and the weekly report are available free on request from the bureau of epidemiology, Department of National Health and Welfare, Ottawa, Ont. K1A 0L2.

ANDREW SHERRINGTON, MA, BM, B CH,
MMSBC, DHMSA
Scientific editor
Canadian Medical Association Journal

Cancer Chemotherapy Handbook. Robert T. Dorr and William L. Fritz. 785 pp. Illust. Elsevier North-Holland, Inc., New York, 1980. \$40, hardbound; \$25, paperbound. ISBN 0-444-00330-4, hardbound; ISBN 0-444-00343-6, paperbound

As a practising oncologist I frequently receive calls from chemotherapy nurses or hospital pharmacists to enquire about exotic-sounding drugs with apparently bizarre methods of administration and seemingly incredible dosages. Such is the nature of a specialty in which investigational pharmacology has become an integral part of day-to-day clinical practice.

This book is intended as a basic compendium of most of the chemo-

therapeutic drugs that were available in late 1979 as either investigational or licensed agents. Although it is the kind of resource book that will rapidly become dated, it should be available to hospital pharmacists and to those administering chemotherapeutic agents.

In addition to the extensive list of drugs, there are useful outlines of the principles of cancer chemotherapy and of the pharmacologic considerations in scheduling this therapy. Of particular value are comprehensive tables summarizing the toxic effects of most of the agents currently available. The 12-page list of important drug interactions associated with chemotherapy is well documented and may be the

most practical and useful list of this type in the current literature. The references at the end of each drug section are comprehensive and current, and the text that results from the distillation of these references is succinct and direct. It provides most of the information that is necessary for administering an agent and for recognizing its possible toxic effects. For those who want to become more familiar with a particular agent, this text provides the references to the original literature.

This is a book that can relieve much of the anxiety a clinician may feel when faced with a new drug. However, it may be advisable to buy the less expensive soft-cover edition, as it will probably have to

be replaced by an updated version within 2 or 3 years.

HARVEY SCHIPPER, MD, FRCP[C]
Manitoba Cancer Treatment
and Research Foundation
Winnipeg, Man.

Cardiac Catheterization and Angiography. 2nd ed. Edited by William Grossman. 427 pp. Illust. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1980. \$41.50 (Can.) ISBN 0-8121-0714-4

For this second edition of "Cardiac Catheterization and Angiography" Grossman has edited the contributions of 24 experts who provide an up-to-date summary of their specialties. The brief outline of the history of cardiac catheterization is interesting. It is followed by an analysis of the principles underlying the proper use of radiologic and cineangiographic equipment.

Most of the techniques of the catheterization laboratory are concisely described, including the isolation of veins, the puncturing of arteries, the manipulation of different kinds of catheters, transseptal catheterization, transluminal dilatation of arterial stenoses (including those of the coronary artery) and endomyocardial biopsy. The sections on hemodynamic principles and angiographic techniques are well written and emphasize the necessary projections. A section on evaluating cardiac function offers practical discussions of some of the techniques used, including dynamic and isometric exercise, atrial pacing, His-bundle electrocardiography and the assessment of ventricular volume, left ventricular myocardial mechanics and myocardial blood flow. There are excellent profiles of the hemodynamic and angiographic abnormalities that occur in valvular disease, coronary artery disease, pulmonary embolism, cardiomyopathies and congenital heart disease.

I found this book well organized, up to date, brief and clearly written. The illustrations are well selected and clear. Those who use cardiac catheterization and angiographic procedures should own and study this book.

MANT HARAPHONGSE, MD, FRCP[C]
Director
Hemodynamic laboratory
University of Alberta Hospital
Edmonton, Alta.

Clinical Methods in Pediatric Diagnosis. Balu H. Athreya. 289 pp. Illust. Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, New York; Van Nostrand Reinhold Limited, Scarborough, 1980. \$31.95. ISBN 0-442-23363-9

The lack of a concise work on the art and science of clinical diagnosis in children from infancy to adolescence has now been remedied. This book is direct and comprehensive, and is written with a simple approach and a lucid style. The topics range from the fundamentals of taking a history and eliciting physical signs to the more sophisticated methods of assessing behaviour. The book is illustrated with a selection of helpful diagrams, clinical photographs, graphs and charts that are well integrated into the text. The tables are clear, with relevant headings and appropriate references.

The author's systematic approach to physical diagnosis combines simplicity and completeness. Potentially confusing topics are clarified, often with the help of illustrations. The last two chapters, on assessing child development and examining newborns, deserve special mention. Here the book is at its best. The material presented is elaborate yet accessible — a truly superb achievement.

The book is recommended for interns and residents in pediatrics, and for those preparing for examinations in this specialty. Family physicians who wish to become more adept at the physical examination and assessment of both healthy and sick children should have it in their office, not standing on the bookshelf but lying open and ready on the desk. Although it is probably not practical for medical students to own this work, it would be valuable and useful for them to read it and to have it available for reference.

The only criticism I would make is that the title is somewhat cumbersome. Perhaps "Clinical Diagnosis in Pediatrics" would have been preferable.

M.H.K. SHOKEIR, MD, PH D
Professor and head
Department of pediatrics
University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon, Sask.

Plasmapheresis and Plasma Exchange. Volume 1. T.J. Hamblin. 124 pp. Eden Press Inc., Westmount, PQ, 1979. \$18. ISBN 0-88831-065-X

At first glance this small book seems overpriced. However, closer inspection reveals that it contains useful data and references and would be a helpful handbook for nurses, physicians and others engaged in administering plasmapheresis and plasma exchange therapy.

Nevertheless, it does have its limitations. Although the use of this type of therapy is expanding, the book contains references only to the diseases for which it had been used as of 1978. Despite the growth in the number of uses for plasma exchange, it has been established as therapeutic for relatively few diseases. Yet Hamblin fails to discuss the need for controlled evaluation trials. However, he does present a balanced view of the use of plasma exchange to treat certain diseases for which its benefits are unproven, such as immune thrombocytopenia.

Occasionally the book contains unjustified statements: in the section on replacement fluids Hamblin advises that fresh frozen plasma may be needed to prevent hemorrhage when more than 2 l of plasma is being exchanged, but he does not specify the patient's size. Experience has taught us that fresh frozen plasma is rarely needed with plasma exchanges of such large volume even when the patient has very low procoagulant levels at the end of the procedure. As well, he terms plasma protein fraction the "volume expander of choice" and considers that negative reactions to it are "few". Neither statement would be acceptable to most practitioners using this therapy in North America. The possibility of catastrophic anaphylactic reactions to dextrans is not mentioned although it is well known. Before accepting any statements in this book, practitioners should consult the references.

Unfortunately, this book also fails to describe either current research or progress in plasma exchange therapy: there is little mention of immune adsorption or of